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Friday's Gospel: The Miraculous Catch

Gospel for Friday in the 1st Week of Easter, and commentary.

Gospel (*Jn 21:1-14*)

After this Jesus revealed himself again to the disciples by the Sea of Tiberias; and he revealed himself in this way. Simon Peter, Thomas called the Twin, Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two others of his disciples were together. Simon Peter said to them, "I am going fishing." They said to him, "We will go with you." They went out and got

into the boat; but that night they caught nothing.

Just as day was breaking, Jesus stood on the beach; yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to them, “Children, have you any fish?” They answered him, “No.” He said to them, “Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find some.” So they cast it, and now they were not able to haul it in, for the quantity of fish.

That disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, “It is the Lord!” When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on his clothes, for he was stripped for work, and sprang into the sea. But the other disciples came in the boat, dragging the net full of fish, for they were not far from the land, but about a hundred yards off.

When they got out on land, they saw a charcoal fire there, with fish lying

on it, and bread. Jesus said to them, “Bring some of the fish that you have just caught.” So Simon Peter went aboard and hauled the net ashore, full of large fish, a hundred and fifty-three of them; and although there were so many, the net was not torn. Jesus said to them, “Come and have breakfast.” Now none of the disciples dared ask him, “Who are you?” They knew it was the Lord. Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them, and so with the fish. This was now the third time that Jesus was revealed to the disciples after he was raised from the dead.

Commentary

Peter and the disciples seem to have exhausted themselves uselessly. After a night of hard work they have not managed to catch anything. As dawn

begins to break, it is time to stop trying and pack up the gear and wait for better days.

The Gospel account tells us nothing about how frustrated the disciples might have felt, but it is easy to imagine that this was the case. No one who works all night can fail to be upset by such a resounding failure.

Nevertheless, nothing was in vain. These were possibly the best spent hours of fishing by Peter, Thomas, Nathanael and the others.

The boat returns completely empty by God's express will. For the emptier the boat, the more readily they will receive the generous miracle of the risen Christ. The first disciples need to learn that it is God who provides – that they can't do anything on their own. Jesus had already told them: "Without me, you can do nothing." But now he reminds them of this in a vivid and real way.

After an exhausting night of effort, nothing is achieved. But by simply following the Lord's simple instruction, "cast the net on the right," the nets are quickly filled with 153 large fish.

Our boat too needs to be empty. Empty of our pride. Then our generous God will abundantly pour out his grace. It is true that emptying the boat often requires fatigue and humiliation. But it is worth it.

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